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SIPDIS

STATE FOR USAID
STATE FOR G; CA/OCS/ACS/EAP; EAP/EX; EAP/BCLTV; EAP/EP; INR;
OES/STC (PBATES); OES/IHA (DSINGER AND NCOMELLA)
BANGKOK FOR RMO, CDC, USAID/RDM/A (MFRIEDMAN)
USDA FOR FAS/PASS TO APHIS
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FOR OSD/ISA/AP (LSTERN)
USAID FOR ANE AND GH (DCAROLL, SCLEMENTS AND PCHAPLIN)
STATE PASS USTR (ELENA BRYAN)
STATE ALSO PASS HHS/OGHA (EELVANDER)
ROME FOR FAO

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: VIETNAM: AVIAN INFLUENZA WEEKLY REPORT FOR NOVEMBER
3, 2005

REF: A) Hanoi 2858 and previous

11. (U) Summary. There have been no new cases of human Avian Influenza (AI) reported since Mission Vietnam's last weekly update on October 27 (reftel). Two suspected cases of AI are currently under investigation by the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) held a Donor's Meeting on November 1 and Mission Vietnam's contingency planning for AI continues.

TWO NEW AI CASES, MAYBE.?

12. (SBU) There have been no new human AI cases since August 29. However, according to WHO Resident Representative Dr. Hans Troedsson, two recent deaths are being investigated by WHO to determine if AI was the real cause of death. According to press reports, a 14-year-old girl died on October 23 and a 26-year old man died on October 26. Both victims were not related and lived in Quang Binh Province. Troedsson noted that the cases are "suspicious on clinical grounds" but that it was too early to tell if the cause of death was indeed AI.

GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM EFFORTS

13. (U) The poultry vaccination program continues to progress in Vietnam and additional vaccines being imported from China. Press reports indicate that Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Cao Duc Phat will ban the importation of assorted poultry and ornamental birds from November 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006. Prime Minister Phan Van Khai also directed MARD and the Ministry of Health to closely cooperate with WHO and other countries in order to produce anti-influenza vaccines for poultry and humans in Vietnam.

14. (U) As a sign that equal attention to AI is now coming from the political side as well as technical, the Party Central Committee called in senior MARD officials last week and later issued a directive instructing lower level administrative units to implement AI prevention measures. The Central Committee also tasked the Fatherland Front and other political organizations with improving public awareness.

UNITED STATES AI COORDINATION

15. (U) The Academy for Educational Development (AED) team funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has completed their Vietnam country visit and will be drawing up a regional/country specific work plan for USAID's review and concurrence. While in Vietnam, AED met with numerous agencies in the government, other donors and NGO's working on the sector as well as the Embassy's Public Affairs office. USAID also continues to garner interest from the private sector to develop public-private partnerships to combat AI.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY EFFORTS & UN DONOR'S MEETING

16. (U) AUSAID's Global Development Alliance consultant met with U.S. businesses in Ho Chi Minh City last week to discuss public-private partnerships to combat AI, including a possible network of agricultural sales representatives to disseminate information on AI to rural farmers.

17. (U) Press reports also noted that the Netherlands has agreed to contribute 1 million Euros (USD 1.2 million) to support the United Nations-coordinated emergency program against AI in Vietnam.

18. (U) The Deputy Chief of Mission, USAID Country Representative and EconOff attended a November 1 UNDP Donor's Meeting. An FAO/World Bank Mission Team gave a debriefing and presentation on the progress of the AI Emergency Project; an update on the joint Government of Vietnam (GOV) - FAO/WHO/UNDP Program on AI, Phase I - Emergency Support; and Proposal for Donor Coordination on AI. According to the team, there has been good progress in implementing Vietnam's poultry vaccination program but there have been some delays. The Team also recommended that donors should improve the coordinating mechanism to fully account for the funds being provided for AI.

19. (U) The Team stated that there were five priorities for international support, including: 1) Vaccinations; 2) Early Warning; 3) Capacity Building; 4) Long-Term Planning; 5) Awareness Raising and Public Information. UNDP Country Representative Jordan Ryan stated that while the UNDP/WHO/FAO AI plan is fully funded for short-term AI projects, at least USD 121.2 million was needed for long term AI planning and response.

EMBASSY AI PREPAREDNESS

10. (SBU) Post's Consular Section Staff attended an October 28 AI preparedness meeting hosted by Dr. Stephanie Lescar of SOS Clinic. SOS is a clinic that primarily serves the expatriate community in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. SOS gave general guidance on AI preparedness and when asked how much Tamiflu they had on stock, SOS was vague. Dr. Lescar, however, stated that it was no longer possible to get Tamiflu in Vietnam.

11. (U) Mission Vietnam continues to work on its AI contingency plans and held a Digital Video Conference with the Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City on November 3. Mission Vietnam's AI Working Group discussed tripwires, the use of Tamiflu, shelter in place and evacuation procedures.

MARINE